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AUTHOR Preiss, Raymond W.
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ABSTRACT

The usefulness of meta-analysis in summarizing domains of primary research has led to widespread use of the techniques. Often, however, the researcher will have several options when cumulating empirical studies and readers will have questions regarding judgment calls made during a meta-analysis. In these cases, it is helpful to consult the primary literature on meta-analytic theory and practice. Reported here are over 160 articles and papers divided into two bibliographies: (1) conceptual issues; and (2) statistical issues. The bibliographies are discussed in terms of conducting a meta-analysis and teaching research methods. Both bibliographies trace the evolution of meta-analytic procedures in order to highlight the intellectual dialog surrounding the practice. The bibliography as a whole may prove valuable to teachers of graduate and undergraduate research methods courses, and may be used as a teaching tool by alerting students to the conceptual similarities of diverse statistical methods. (Author/SLD)

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Meta-analysis: A Bibliography of Conceptual Issues and Statistical Methods

Raymond W. Preiss, Ph. D.

Department of Communication

University of Puget Sound

Tacoma, WA 98416

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Meta-analysis: A Bibliography of Conceptual Issues and Statistical Methods

Abstract

The usefulness of meta-analysis in summarizing domains of primary research has led to widespread use of the techniques. Often, however, the researcher will have several options when cumulating empirical studies and readers will have questions regarding judgment calls made during a meta-analysis. In these cases, it is helpful to consult the primary literature on meta-analytic theory and practice. Reported here are over 160 articles and papers divided into two bibliographies: (a) conceptual issues; and (b) statistical issues. The bibliographies are discussed in terms of conducting a meta-analysis and teaching research methods.

Meta-analysis: A Bibliography of Conceptual Issues and Statistical Methods

Meta-analysis is a technique for empirically summarizing the features of a research domain. The practice has gained widespread acceptance and empirical reviews can be found in virtually all academic disciplines. With increased use, an evolution of meta-analytic thought resulted in variations on basic methods (Bangert-Drowns, 1986). The bibliographies in this paper are designed to identify primary resources used as evidence by the various schools of meta-analysis.

A substantial body of literature on meta-analysis has accumulated since Glass coined the term in 1976. In an attempt to organize these materials, two bibliographies are reported: (a) conceptual issues; and (b) statistical issues. Obviously there is overlap, and some questions will require readers to consult both bibliographies. The bibliographies are not designed to be comprehensive, and the studies cited call attention only to the major conceptual and methodological issues. An effort was made to assemble a representative sample of major positions on research synthesis. To this end, both bibliographies include exchanges between scholars that trace the evolution of meta-analytic procedures. The intent here is to highlight the intellectual dialog surrounding the practice.

Conducting a meta-analysis frequently involves judgment calls and requires sensitivity to characteristics of the statistical procedures used to test hypotheses. The bibliography on statistical methods can direct interested researchers to primary resources on combining independent studies. Often, these materials can resolve ambiguities and clarify the logic behind preferred methods. The intent is to increase understanding of the concepts, procedures, and available options when conducting a meta-analysis.

The bibliography may prove valuable to teachers of graduate and undergraduate research methods courses. Fundamental to meta-analytic procedures is an appreciation of for the logic and characteristics of statistical tests. Thus, the bibliography may be used as a teaching tool by alerting students to the conceptual similarities of diverse statistical methods. Often, a strategically selected example will convey these similarities. A bibliography of over 200 studies employing meta-analytic methods is available from the author on request.

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